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Samson Adesina Akinola

Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Nigeria, saakinola@jabu.edu.ng

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SECURITY OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND CRIME CHALLENGES IN
NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: A LOOK AT THE SITUATION IN
JOSEPH AYO BABALOLA UNIVERSITY, IKEJI ARAKEJI

Samson A. Akinola
Joseph Ayo Babalola University
Ikeji – Arakeji
samade_samola@yahoo.com

08165625219

ABSTRACT

This study looked at the security and crime challenges facing library resources in Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji, Nigeria. The security and prevention of crimes in academic libraries are essential duties for librarians. As a result of crime and security violations and their effects in academic libraries, patrons at times are unable to locate information materials they desire. This situation portrays the library ineffectual in fulfilling users' information needs and in its mission generally. The paper, therefore, investigated the security contraventions in academic libraries in Nigeria University Libraries with a focus on the situation in Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji -Arakeji. The survey research method was expended for the study. Data for the study was collected using questionnaires designed and distributed to the staff of the library and students of the university. In analyzing and presenting the data collected, simple percentages (%) were used. The result of the finding showed that the library is confronted with various types of security and crime problems which include book theft, book mutilations, noise-making, eating in the library, non-return of library materials, keeping borrowed material beyond due dates, purposeful wrong shelving of books, writing on and in books. The study also discovered that print materials like textbooks, serial/periodical materials, reference materials, and reserve materials are the most vulnerable to security violations. The study

recommended the intensification of security in the library premises and in the various reading halls through increased supervision, patrolling of the porters, surveillance, and installation of electronic security gadgets (CCTV) in the library building and the enactment of a written security policy for the library. The paper also suggested that enlightenment lectures should be given to the students and other staff users on the need to observe the library rules and regulations and on the preservation and conservation of library resources.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Library Resources, Library Crime, Library Security,
Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji - Arakeji

INTRODUCTION

The university atmosphere is not enduringly a safe and secure environment. Situations of violence, theft and destruction are occurrences that cannot be totally avoided in universities. The University libraries as part of the university system are not exempted as they are open to various security and crime problems. There are many latent problems in security that university libraries face. Theft of library resources is a dilemma dating from ancient times. The raid of the great Alexandria library by soldiers of the prophet in the 7th century was the first documented example. In agreement to Maidabino and Zainab, (2011), academic libraries are the intellectual banks which provide avenue for students and colleges to carry out their research works and improve their knowledge. The library is so vital that a well-stocked and equipped library is a compulsory benchmark for accreditation of higher institutions all over the world. The objectives of libraries are to acquire academic information materials, process them, and preserve them from deterioration and loss and to make the materials readily accessible to libraries users. Libraries do this with a vision to satisfy the needs of both present and future users. The

security of library resources entails the need for libraries to provide, maintain and secure their material resources to guarantee long life span, accessibility and effective provision of services to users. In order to adequately succeed in this role, libraries require effective approaches to assess the level of security and crime threat to their collection so that they can establish acceptable level of library resources security apparatus. In most cases, security of library stock is not regarded as a major concern until librarians carry out audit of stock and grasp that a substantial quantity of library materials cannot be found. In a study conducted by Okoyo (2000) in the Department of Library and Information Science, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, showed that an annual loss of 1 to 11.5% was recorded in some academic libraries in Anambra State in 1990s. Currently this is much higher and reports of 10% annual loss are by no means uncommon, in fact they could be much higher because so many libraries do not carry out stock taking. Salaam and Onifade (2010) indicated that theft of library resources is a perennial problem in libraries. Consequently, it is necessary to analyze the library resources security issues and the crime challenges in academic libraries in order to provide quality services for users. Library crime is a global and ancient problem as such the security of library materials has been the subject of much investigation. However, the situation seems not to be getting better. No wonder Nielson (2002) described library security management to be 'simply too bad a state of affairs'. Destructive habits of some users such as theft, mutilation and hiding of information materials pose a great problem to other users who are often prevented from having access to library materials. As a result of these negative practices, the library staff experience difficulties in providing quality services and the library management also runs into financial inadequacy of replacing lost or damaged collections. According to Akussah and Bentil (2010) stealing and defacement of books

and non-books is a generic negative occurrence in Nigerian university libraries, and if not looked into, will lead to a grave threat to library materials and their preservation. Ajegbomogun (2004) observed that library resources security denotes a procedure planned to protect library resources from illegal removal or loss. This includes protecting resources against disasters and thieves and intruders. Throughout the ages, librarians are concerned on ways to safeguard the safety of Library resources from theft and damage. The reduction in the accessible resources means retardation in how the library can serve and satisfy the requirements of the users. It is therefore critical to preserve available resources from theft and mutilation. Defacement, damages, violence, arson and other lawless undertakings are required to be appropriately tackled, measured and the degree of their existence in the libraries to be comprehended by the contemporary librarians. The lawless acts perpetuated by some library users have denied several other users from wholly attaining their information requests. Defacement, damages, mutilation and theft are problems often met in libraries since libraries are the paramount homes where information resources are selected, acquired, organized, preserved and disseminated to users. Several number of these information resources are not only rare to stumble upon but they are also costly and delicate in nature. Nowadays libraries of all kind, academic, special, public, school and national libraries expend huge financial resources to mount security systems to check criminal events. In order to ensure the effective use, durability, and accessibility of library materials, an effective system of resources security is necessary. It is imperative to safeguard library resources. It is correspondingly significant to ensure that the security is implemented as seamlessly as possible, without interfering with the library's objective of providing a user-friendly environment (McComb, 2004). The awful experience is that, the more these control and

security systems are available in the libraries, the more the libraries lose their security values originally identified with. The loss of library resources is a recurring issue in libraries all over the globe, but it appears to be sterner in academic institutions in Nigeria. No surprise Ogbonyomi (2011) declared that the delinquents of this kind of crimes are the users for whom the materials are acquired to serve. There is no sufficient security to combat negative behaviours and loss of materials in the library. Likewise, inadequate fund has not improved the situation as large sum of money is required for effective security of library materials to be attained. This problem shows the necessity to identify the present situation of security and crime on library resources in academic libraries. Librarians must therefore possess a perfect vision and focus on the contemporary reality of security breaches in academic libraries, particularly those steering on library materials. This is one of the things librarians should concern themselves with if they are to successfully manage a flourishing and efficient library.

HISTORY OF JOSEPH AYO BABALOLA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The University Library, which was established at the same time the University was born, has been playing supportive roles in the actualization of the mission and vision of the institution. The collections of the main University Library are made up of twenty-two thousand books in different fields, and two thousand serial titles. The library is partially automated using KOHA Integrated Library Management software. The Cataloguing function is fully automated while the Circulation activities are fairly automated. Other functions of the library are manually done. The Library has an e library, which is connected to the internet. The library was established to provide information resources in support of teaching, learning and research in the university. The objectives of the library

are to collect and preserve the most up to date materials for teaching, research and to collect and preserve information resources in books and non-book formats, and to give user-oriented services to its users. The sections in the library include the circulation section, the cataloguing section, serials section, reference section and reprography section and a bindery section. The Library also has overflows in all the colleges, namely, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Law, College of Management Sciences, College of Environmental Sciences and College of Natural Sciences. All these college libraries are well equipped with books, journals and information communication technology facilities. The University College of Health Sciences Library is also underway.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The Universities expenditure on the acquisition of library resources and provision of library services is enormous. This expenditure is justified by the central and all important role of the library in the overall mission and vision of university education. The protection of these resources is therefore paramount to the library professionals. As it is a general phenomenon, library resources are usually abused by mutilation, stealing and vandalism by delinquent users' aside the tendency of natural hazards. The degree of this human factor on the safety of library collections varies from one library to another; however it is a universal issue. The library professionals therefore need to ensure a high degree of security of their resources. A clear focus and vision of the reality of these security problems and crime is necessary so as to successfully manage a flourishing and effective library. Therefore the object of this study is to find out the security problems to

library resources and crime challenges in Nigerian university libraries with a special look at the situation in Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji – Arakeji.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follow:

- a. To find out the security and crime problems to the library resources in Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU) Library, Ikeji – Arakeji
- b. To investigate the causes of security and crime problems in the library
- c. To determine the types of materials that are more vulnerable to security and crime breaches
- d. To find out the measures that the library can use to contest security and crime problems in the library

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study

- a. Are there security and crime problems in JABU Library?
- b. What are the causes of the security and crime problems in the library?
- c. What type of library materials is more vulnerable to security and crime issues?
- d. What are the measures that can be adopted by the library to contest security and crime problems in the library?

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is on human factors on the security of the library resources and library crime in Joseph Ayo Babalola University Library, Ikeji Arakeji. The study focuses particularly on identifying the various kinds of library resources and their security and crime problems and ways of fighting these problems.

SIGNIFANCE OF THE STUDY

The negative effects of human factors on the security of library collection militate against the effective provision of adequate information materials to the present users and the coming generation of users. Likewise, the budget allocation for the acquisition of materials is very heavy especially during this present period of economic depression. Therefore a study of this nature obviously becomes very significant so as to grasp the various lapses in the security; crime and protection of the library materials in order to maxima the lifespan of the resources and reduce cost of replacement and repairs of these resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of library resources security is of vital importance in academic libraries as a result, there are numerous literatures on the problems of library security and crime challenges in academic libraries. The security and safety of library resources is an area in librarianship that deserves serious consideration by librarians, information specialist and other stakeholders at large considering the huge amount of financial resources on the library and the importance of its resources in the overall mission of universities. The level at which library crime are perpetuated in libraries cannot be overemphasized.

Library crime is immoral attitude which deny other library users the privilege of information use in library. Library crimes are perpetuated by lazy and uncultured users for their selfish use. Library crimes are more regular occurrences towards the end of academic semester when examination is approaching. The proportion at which library resources vanish in libraries cannot be over-stressed. Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) succumbed that outrageous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refusal to return overdue borrowed materials, drinking and eating in the library, among others have become common occurrences in academic library. Doubtless if this trend is not curbed, it will prime up to grave deficiency of information materials in the library. According to Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) stated that academic libraries in the developing nations, including Nigeria, lack security measures which encourage users to perform such immoral act as of removing information resources in illegal ways. Aside from this, library materials are not available in multiple copies some libraries. Furthermore, most libraries do not have photocopying facilities for users in case of need. In some cases, when available, incessant change in power supply does not give room for users to make copies of urgently needed materials. This among others tempts the users to engage in such destructive act. According to Momodu (2002), academic libraries face wavering levels of lawless behaviours in the utilization of their resources particularly materials and to certain extent manpower. The magnitude of this delinquency differs from one library to another library. In some libraries, the dimension of the problem is so constrained that it appears not to exist, while in other libraries, the degree is so enormous that it cries for urgent and thoughtful intervention. In the findings of a study carried out by Momodu (2002) on 'The delinquent readership in selected urban libraries in Nigeria' showed that all libraries have delinquent user problem and that there is no

exact relationship between the type of library and the degree of the problem. The problem appears to be general. Ugah (2007) considered the security of library as a threat and formidable obstacles to information access and use. According to him, such acts are serious problems that can result in user dissatisfaction. He established the key security problems in libraries to comprise: stealing and defacement; destruction; damages and disaster; over borrowing or delinquent borrowers; and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials. Libraries in Nigeria perform the major aspects of their activities manually. Studies have shown that library crime is on the escalation in a number of Nigerian academic libraries. It has been discovered that there was no substantial correlation established between security measures adopted and the rate of crime. The proportion of deteriorating budgets and increasing subscription cost confronting academic institutions are making it apparently difficult for libraries to meet the mounting information needs of university students let alone allowing the loss of the available collections. Ifidon (2000) in his own estimation stated that defacement and stealing in libraries is a threat that has continued, and it is undeniably a global problem. Adewuyi and Adekanye (2011) highlighted these approaches as method used in stealing library materials

- a Hiding library material(s) under clothes
- b Throwing library material(s) through the window and door when people are not observing
- c. Putting library material(s) in handbag and briefcase
- d. Collaborating with library staff to steal library materials

e. The outright selling of library books by library staff to supplement their monthly salary and making friends with porters before carrying out their illegitimate plans.

Studies have also identified some reasons that motivate crimes in libraries. According to Lorenzen (1996) he discovered the following as reasons for stealing and defacement of library material(s)

a. Students' dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services

b. Lack of knowledge of replacement costs and time

c. Lack of concern for the needs of others

d. A small number of students consider mutilation and stealing of library materials as a crime.

It is a general habit amongst students to steal or detach pages of library materials because of high cost of books in Nigeria. Several students are financially handicapped. Therefore the only alternative is to tear off pages of the textbooks or steal the whole textbook from the library. The Reprographic sections in most university libraries do not have photocopy facilities for users in instances of need for photocopying service and when this facility is available it is always confronted with problems which do not give room for users to make copies of urgent material needed. This among other reasons tempts users to be involved in disruptive act. It can therefore be concluded that security of library resources and crime challenges in academic libraries are recurring problem of libraries all over the world and therefore needs to be given prime attention. Ayong, Boatbill, and Banbil (2014) conducted a study on 'How Secured is Library Collections: An Evaluation of Polytechnic Libraries in Ghana. The conclusions of the study indicated that 77.8% of staff of the polytechnic libraries in Ghana has librarianship allied education.

Nonetheless, 50% of staff sampled showed that their polytechnic had never sent them on any seminar or workshop or any form of continuous training to up-to-date their understandings on contemporary developments in the profession since they were engaged by the polytechnic. According to their submission, the most problematic delinquents to handle are the academic staff who are frequently mentioned for non-return of books. The imposition of fines and other corrective measures do not regularly produce anticipated outcome. This is ordinarily because the implementation of rules and regulations guiding the library is difficult to execute particularly while the management fail to give sufficient support because they are guilty themselves. As a result librarians have no alternative than to entreat staff to return borrowed materials in their possessions. . However, according to respondents, most of these entreaties do not induce the recovery of materials. Though the library has the choice of instigating a charge procedure against defaulters, however this has never happened. Among all the libraries sampled, there were no any forms of written security policy in place. This confirms the findings of Burrows and Cooper (1992). Without a regulatory framework, it implies that measures to combat the rapid collection depletion are through ad hoc processes. According to Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) in their study on “Disruptive Readers in Academic Libraries: A Study of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library”. disruptive behaviour is a general occurrence among users of academic libraries; limited materials, selfish interest and lack of photocopying facilities aid stealing and unlawful removal of parts of books and other materials ; Self-interest among users, author's, integrity and limitation/scarcity of materials encourage users to hide library materials ; lack of orientation, lack of discipline, ignorance, and group discussion give room for users distortion in the library; library materials may not be easily located when needed, and

strike actions among others make users to hold overdue materials; high registration fees and loss of original card were the reasons for using fake library card .and users eat in the library due to lack of discipline, fatigue, and to avoid sleeping during reading exercise.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research was used to collect data in the study. The population of the study consists of the students and staff of Joseph Ayo Babalola University Library, Ikeji Arakeji. The population sample was fifteen (15) library staff and fifty (50) students, giving a total of sixty-five respondents used for the study.. The instrument employed for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the students who used the library during the 2018/2019 second semester examination. The library staff were administered the questionnaire during working hours. Interview and observation were also conducted to supplement the information gathered from the questionnaire. To adequately present the findings of the study the percentages of option such as agreed and disagreed were used in presenting the results in the study. The finding is presented in Tables 1-4.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 1: Kinds of Security and Crime Problem facing Library Resources in JABU

S/N	Security/Crime Problems	Agree (percentages)	Disagree (percentages)	I don't know (percentages)	Total (percentages)
1	Book theft	50 (76.9%)	15(23.1%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
2	Book mutilation	60 (92.3%)	5 (7.7%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
3	Non- return of borrowed books	45 (69.2%)	20 (30.8%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
4	Using fake ID cards to borrow books	30 (46.2%)	20 (30.8%)	15 (23.0%)	65 (100%)
5	Wrong shelving of books	62 (96.1%)	3 (3.8%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)

6	Noise making in library	64 (98.5%)	1 (1.5%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
7	Eating in the library	40 (65.4%)	20 (30.8%)	5 (3.8%)	65 (100%)

Table 1 showed that among the items listed under the kinds of security and crime problems in the library, 98.5% of the respondents agreed that noise making in the library is usually high and 96.1 % of them indicated that wrong shelving of library resources is always observed. Over ninety percent (92.3%) of the respondents revealed that book mutilation frequently occur in the library. Over seventy percent (76.9%) of them stated that the rate of book theft is high in the library, while 69.2% of them reported that non-returning of borrowed books is commonly observed. Also, 65.4% of the respondents revealed that eating in the library by the users is one of the security problem observed in the library, while 46.2% stated that using fake identity cards to borrow books is also a security problem observed in the library.

The picture drawn from Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents agreed that noise making in the library, wrong shelving of library books, mutilation of library resources and book theft are high in the library. This finding is similar to Broadhead's (2002) who observed that delinquencies are actions that are illegal or immoral that users carry out during the process of consulting library books and other materials. Such actions include unruly behaviours, receiving phone calls in the library while others are reading, mutilation of library materials, impersonation, theft, misuse of OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) computer system etc. These illegal and immoral acts of users can be found in different types of libraries.

Table 2: Causes of crime in the library

S/N	Causes of crime	Agree (percentages)	Disagree (percentages)	I don't know(percent ages)	Total (percentages)
1	Limited/insufficient library resources for users	60 (92.3%)	5 (7.7%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
2	Selfish interest of the culprits	40 (57.7%)	18 (26.9%)	7 (15.4%)	65 (100%)
3	Lack of proper	36	28 (42.3%)	11 (7.7%)	65 (100%)

	orientation to users on the use of library resources	(50.0%)			
4	Lack of photocopying machines	51 (77.7%)	13 (21.5%)	1 (0.8%)	65(100%)
5	Financial constraint of libraries	45 (69.2%)	15 (23.1%)	5 (7.7%)	65(100%)

From Table 2, the items listed under reasons of crime in the library revealed that majority of the respondents (92.3%) indicated that insufficient library resources for users make users to commit stealing and mutilation in the library. This is followed by lack of photocopying machine (77.7%) while 69.2% indicated that financial constraint causes users to commit crime in the library, 57.7% stated that crimes are committed in the library as a result of selfish interests and 50% admitted that crimes are committed in the library due to lack of appropriate orientation to users on how to use library.

The response in Table 2 showed that most of the respondents revealed that inadequate library materials in the library, lack of copying machine and financial inadequacy generally make users to commit crime of different kinds in the library. This result is parallel to Ugah's (2007) who noticed that the degree of decreasing budgets and soaring subscription rate confronting academic institutions are making it seemingly impossible for libraries to meet the ever increasing information needs of university users.

Table 3: Types of collections vulnerable to security and crime problem

S/N	Types of collections	Agree (percentages)	Disagree (percentages)	I don't know(percentages)	Total (percentages)
1	Print materials in General(Textbooks)	57 (88.5%)	5 (7.7%)	3 (3.8%)	65 (100%)
2	Serial/periodical Collections (Journals)	47 (73.1%)	12 (19.2%)	6 (7.7%)	65 (100%)
3	Reference collections	37 (57.7%)	17 (26.9%)	11 (15.4%)	65 (100%)

4	Reserved collections	27 (42.3%)	32 (50.0%)	6 (7.7%)	65(100%)
5	Non-print collections	2 (3.8%)	63 (96.2%)	Nil (0%)	65(100%)

Table 3 disclosed that most of the respondents (88.5%) indicated that print materials (Textbooks) are the most vulnerable to security and crime problem while 73.1% recorded that serial materials are equally vulnerable to these problems. Over fifty seven percent (57.7%) of the respondents stated that reference materials are also vulnerable to security and crime threat, 42.3% indicated reserve materials and 3.8% showed non-print materials as the type of collection that are vulnerable to security problem in the library.

The depiction drawn from Table 3 showed that of all the materials in the library, only non-print resources has low percentage of vulnerability to security and crime problems.

Table 4: Methods to Contest Security and Crime Problems in the Library

S/N	Measures	Agree (percentages)	Disagree (percentages)	I don't know (percentages)	Total (percentages)
1	Provision of a written security policy	65 (100%)	Nil (0%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
2	Manual security system and monitoring of users in the library premises	65 (100%)	Nil (0%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
3	Use of security guards	65 (100%)	Nil (0%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
4	Checking users ID card before they are allowed access to the library	65 (100%)	Nil (0%)	15 (23.0%)	65 (100%)
5	Staff security training within and outside the	64 (98.5%)	1 (1.5%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)

	library				
6	Users should be searched before leaving the library	65 (100%)	Nil (0%)	Nil (0%)	65 (100%)
7	Electronic security system should be introduced	65 (100%)	Nil (0%)	5 (3.8%)	65 (100%)

Table 4 revealed that 100% of the respondents agreed that a written security policy be provided in the library, enforcement of users monitoring in the library, use of security guards in the library, inspection of users ID cards, exhaustive searching of users before they leave the library and installation of electronic security system while 98.5% of them indicated the need for staff security training as variables that should all be in place to serve as preventive methods that could check security problems and crimes in the library.

From the findings, it is clear that the respondents indicated a high level of interest in all the options indicated in Table 4. This to a large extent showed that urgent attention is needed to effect these changes in the library in order to improve the use of the library.

DISCUSSION

From Table 1 it was revealed that noise making, book mutilation and book theft as well as wrong shelving are common problems observed in the library. Probably this unfortunate situation could be caused by the deteriorating economy affecting every sector of the society including the academic libraries. The degree of depreciating allocation and ever increasing subscription cost confronting academic institutions is making it seemingly impossible for libraries to meet the increasing information needs of university users. There is inadequate budgetary allocation to libraries by the institutional authorities for running the libraries. There is no reservation therefore that the bad financial situation in the library actually made the respondents to disclose in Table 2 that insufficient library resources and lack of photocopying machines are the major

factors that cause crime in the library. This finding is similar to the submission of the American Library Association (ALA) (2010) view that the university libraries should provide varied, authoritative and up-to-date resources that support their missions and the needs of users. The value of the library collection is measured by their usability as well as quality and size. Unfortunately, it is observed that the sizes of collections in most university libraries are inadequate and this affects the educational standard of the universities. This is similar to Kuh and Gonyea's (2003) view that, the size of a collection is used as an indicator of academic quality. Lastly, non-print resources are the only ones with low percentage indicating they are not vulnerable to security problems as shown in Table 3, this is perhaps because of the technical nature of the materials and the few numbers of electronic resources which are closely watched by the library staff therefore, stealing them from the libraries would be a difficult task.

CONCLUSION

The paper has unveiled the security and crime threat facing library resources in Joseph Ayo Babalola University Library and ways of contesting this ugly situation. It should be noted that adequate understanding of these problems and the use effective security and crime control measures could effectively improve a wide range of library services and users satisfaction while reducing the total library expenditure annually. Therefore, based on the findings of this research the following recommendations are made for the university library to implement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The enactment of a well written security policy for the library that will spell out the security and crime problems in the library and their appropriate disciplinary actions

- b. Adequate and intensive shelving and shelve- reading of the library materials to ease users' information search and to discourage stealing habits
- c. The urgent provision of reprography and photocopying service at affordable price in the library
- d. Thorough searches should be carried on users before entering and leaving the library
- e. Orientation of users and staff should be done regularly in the library in order to impart user education into library users.
- f. Staff training on how to prevent the culprits from perpetuating the act within and outside the library.
- g. Electronic security system should be introduced in library

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